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**GUIDELINES FOR ECS BILINGUAL  
(PARTIAL IMMERSION) PROGRAMS**

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# **Language Services**

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**GUIDELINES FOR ECS BILINGUAL  
(PARTIAL IMMERSION) PROGRAMS**

**ALBERTA EDUCATION 1988  
INTERIM EDITION**



## **GUIDELINES FOR ECS BILINGUAL (PARTIAL IMMERSION) PROGRAMS**

The guidelines outlined in this statement were developed by Alberta Education with the cooperation of school system and school based administrators and are fully supported by the Language Services Branch of the Student Programs and Evaluation Division. The guidelines are the result of an extensive review of the literature and research on bilingual (partial immersion) and immersion education as well as a study of the issues and concerns expressed by parents, staff and ECS operators in Alberta.

In the following text, the term ECS bilingual program refers to a partial immersion program which makes use of a language other than English or French as the language of instruction.

If you have any questions about these guidelines or bilingual ECS programs contact the Associate Director (Second Language Programs) or Program Manager (Bilingual Education) at the following address:

2nd Floor,  
Devonian Building  
11160 Jasper Avenue  
EDMONTON, AB  
T5K 0L2 (427-2940)





## 1. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- 1.1 The development, implementation and evaluation of ECS bilingual programs should be consistent with the philosophy, goals and program dimensions of Early Childhood Services (Philosophy, Goals, Program Dimensions, Early Childhood Services, 1986).
- 1.2 Program content should take into account the developmental and special needs of children with a major focus on the development of a positive self-concept.
- 1.3 Provisions should be made for children in ECS bilingual programs to communicate their needs and interests with the assurance that the language used by the child is understood and accepted by the staff. This is important for the development of language and thinking skills, particularly since we know that second language acquisition proceeds more rapidly when the first language is well developed.
- 1.4 Opportunities should be provided for meaningful parent involvement which meet parents' needs to be informed, consulted and to participate actively in all parts of the program, including advisory and decision-making roles.
- 1.5 Programs should provide opportunities for child-selected activities, concrete experiences and learning through play.
- 1.6 Provisions should be made for the effective use of community services and resources, especially those related to the target language and culture.
- 1.7 ECS bilingual programs should provide a cultural and linguistic learning environment which enhances the acquisition of the target language.

1.8 Program evaluation should include consideration of all program dimensions including the objectives related to acquisition of the target language.

1.9 Bilingual programs should be articulated from ECS to grade 6.

## 2. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

2.1 The development, implementation and evaluation of ECS bilingual programs should be based upon sound principles of second language acquisition (reference: Teaching in a Language Other Than English: The Immersion Approach).

2.2 Vocabulary should be presented orally through activities which are meaningful to children.

2.3 The amount of instructional time in the target language should be optimized and reflect the policies of the school board, category 1 or 2 private school or private ECS operator offering the program. Extensive aural stimulation should be provided, and translation from the target language into English and frequent changes from one language to the other by the teacher are to be kept at a minimum.

2.4 During the first year of an ECS bilingual program, children with no previous experience in the target language should not be expected to use that language spontaneously. During this period their comprehension grows as well as their ability to respond to specific questions in the target language with specific phrases and vocabulary. Children should be encouraged to initiate speech spontaneously, but should not be forced to do so.

2.5 Errors in children's use of the target language should be handled in a



natural and positive manner. For instance, the child's utterance can be repeated using the correct form without drawing attention to the error.

2.6 Program activities should allow for individual children to acquire fluency in the target language at their own rate.

2.7 ECS bilingual programs should provide for the different linguistic needs of children who already possess some fluency in the target language prior to entering the program as well as those who do not. Although children already fluent in the target language may serve as language models for beginning learners, all language needs require individual attention regardless of fluency level.

### 3. PARENT AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Provisions should be made for discussions among parents and staff about realistic outcomes for children who are involved in an ECS bilingual program.

3.2 Parents, teachers, aides, consultants and administrators who are involved should have a similar understanding of the program and share similar expectations with regard to children's acquisition of the target language.

3.3 Parents should be made aware of the importance of home support in motivating a child to learn the target language.

3.4 Opportunities to acquire an understanding of ECS philosophy, goals and program dimensions, as well as principles of language acquisition, should be provided for ECS staff, consultants, administrators and parents.

3.5 Provisions should be made to ensure adequate communication between parents and staff in the target language and/or English, as appropriate.

### 4. STAFFING

4.1 Operators of ECS bilingual programs should recruit staff (aides, teachers) who possess competencies in child development and language acquisition. Staff must be certified and demonstrate a high degree of fluency in speaking and writing the target language as well as English.

4.2 Operators are advised NOT to begin an ECS bilingual program until staffing requirements have been satisfied.

4.3 Operators should provide a staff development program which ensures that all staff employed in ECS bilingual programs obtain and maintain required competencies.

4.4 ECS staff should participate actively in identifying and meeting their staff development needs through in-service, study and visits to programs where staff are successfully implementing these guidelines.

These guidelines are intended to provide direction for the local development of ECS bilingual programs. For further information, contact:

1. the appropriate Regional Office of Education;
2. Language Services Branch, Alberta Education;
3. local ECS language program operator.







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